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The British Nation: A History. By GEORGE M. WRONG, M.A., Professor of History in the University of Toronto. [Twentieth Century Text-books.] (New York: D. Appleton and Company. 1903. Pp. xxxii, 616.)

A high-school history of "the British nation" by the professor of history in the University of Toronto in itself promises novelties, which are further indicated in the preface. The point of view governing the choice of title is shown by the following extract: "Britain represents many states, and the aspiration to unite the several parts into one effective whole has now become almost a national passion. While England, as pioneer in developing the dominant phase of modern political life — representative government — must always stand first in the history of Britain, other divisions have contributed important elements, and Mr. Green's phrase, the English People, hardly covers the whole range of the history of the British nation" (p. vi). Attention is also called to the fact that "about one-third of the chapters are devoted to social life," using the materials gathered together in Traill's *Social England*; that the author has "aimed especially to interpret the characters of those conspicuous in the narrative," making use of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and that "almost unconsciously to himself Captain Mahan's teaching in regard to the importance of sea-power has pervaded his interpretation of the past."

It may be said at once that these points of view are pretty consistently maintained. The attempt to include the whole of the United Kingdom and the colonies in a book of this size naturally constitutes a difficult task. In his execution of it Professor Wrong gives about sixteen pages in all to Ireland and about ten to Scotland — including in this count the space devoted to such scattered topics as the relations of Elizabeth, Cromwell, William III., Pitt, Peel, and Gladstone to Ireland, and of Edward I., Elizabeth, Charles I., Cromwell, William III., and Anne to Scotland; Wales is mentioned only in passing, and the growth of the British dominions over seas is summed up, for the most part, in a special chapter of twenty pages at the close of the book. The amount of space given to these topics is thus not much greater than in other recent school histories; nevertheless the author lives up to the promise of his title by constantly keeping before the reader's attention, from the first chapter to the last, the fact that the theme of the book is something larger than the mere history of England. Similarly too, the amount of space devoted to questions of sea-power is not great, but the subject is kept to the fore; it is discussed in the first chapter, on geography and race, in the last in connection with the growth of the empire, and incidentally it is touched upon in connection with Blake, the Seven Years' War, Nelson, the Continental System, and the war in the Peninsula. Six of the twenty-three chapters, with a total of 121 pages, deal with such topics as "Pre-Norman Civilization in England," "Society in England at the Close of the Mediæval Period," "The England of Elizabeth," "Social Changes

in the Nineteenth Century''; other chapters in addition deal largely with social topics. Space for such matters is obtained by condensation of the political narrative wherever possible. At times this policy seems carried too far: the causes of the Hundred Years' War are summed up in ten lines, and the struggle is made to turn entirely on the exploded notion of an exclusion based on the Salic law; the Agincourt campaign is given ten lines; twenty lines suffice for Joan of Arc. The statement (p. 355), that Charles I. in 1627 "attacked France in aid of the Huguenots," without mention of the friction over the marriage-treaty and the affair of the prizes, is distinctly misleading. On the whole, however, the work of condensation is skilfully done, and the result is a readable narrative from which little essential has been omitted.

The book is indeed one of the best school histories of England that is on the market. The style is good, the chapters are supplied with concise summaries of European events at the beginning, and with summaries of dates and lists of books for reference at the close. The maps and illustrations are numerous and well-chosen, and on the whole are well executed; exceptions are Charles II. (p. 410), the elder Pitt (p. 452), and some others in which the half-tone plate needs retouching. Unless the reviewer is much mistaken, the cut on p. 295 labeled "Philip II of Spain," is Philip III. Commendable features are the dates of birth and death given with portraits, the explanatory text where cuts seem to need it, and the indication of the source in the list of illustrations prefixed to the book.

Because the book is on the whole so excellent, it is desirable to point out with some completeness the errata noted. The statement (p. 26) that Christianity "became in 313 the religion of the Empire" goes beyond the facts. Rolf was given Normandy not in 913 but in 911 (p. 46). The Constitutions of Clarendon, as Maitland has shown, did not provide that "clerics might be tried by laymen" (p. 97). Becket was murdered on December 29, not December 27 (p. 99). The statement that Richard I.'s conduct on the Third Crusade was "almost stainless" (p. 108) is too strong a statement. John was not present in person at the battle of Bouvines (p. 113), but was in Poitou. On page 182 the statement that King John of France "could not pay his ransom" and so died in captivity, ignores his release and voluntary return, and is misleading. The characterization of the Templars (p. 248) as "lay monks" is open to objection. On page 477 the statement that "the *farm* had three great fields" must mean the manor or village. The account of the passage of the first Reform act (pp. 518-519) is pretty badly mixed. The bill introduced in March, 1831, did not pass the Commons, and hence was not rejected by the Lords; it was a defeat in committee that led to the dissolution. There was only one rejection by the House of Lords, namely that of the second bill, which was passed by the new House of Commons in September, 1831; and it was after this that the riots broke out in Bristol and elsewhere. The resignation of the ministers took place while the third bill was still before the Lords,

in consequence of an adverse motion carried in committee; and it was this same bill which was finally passed after the return of the ministers to power. On page 561 the "friendly societies" need some explanation for American youth. The Irish famine (p. 564) was in 1846, not 1848. In the index (p. 611) the reference "monk" is to General Monk.

SAMUEL B. HARDING.

Die soziale und politische Bedeutung der Grundherrschaft im früheren Mittelalter. Untersuchungen über Hofrecht, Immunität und Landleihen. Von GERHARD SEELIGER. (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner. 1903. Pp. 204.)

THIS careful and scholarly work is essentially a contribution to the bitter controversy that in recent years has raged in Germany over the interpretation of historical developments by economic causes. The author conducts his investigation with a temperance and amenity that are the more admirable in contrast with the tone that many of his predecessors have permitted themselves to adopt.

The chief purpose of the work is to show the impossibility of accounting for the political and social changes of the early middle ages on economic considerations alone. Landlordship or seigniorial authority (*Grundherrschaft*), Professor Seeliger contends, affected political and social life only in so far as it was privileged and authorized by the state. He institutes a careful inquiry into the nature of benefice, precarium, immunity, and manorial law with the purpose of showing that these institutions lacked that self-consistency, that constancy and precision which alone would justify scholars in operating with them in the peremptory fashion that has commonly been followed in generalizations about the early middle ages. The failure to realize the shifting and multiform aspects of these institutions has produced, in Professor Seeliger's opinion, much vain controversy.

A good example of this is the famous dispute over benefice and precarium carried on by Waitz and Roth. A study of the institutions in question leads our author to the conclusion that one is not justified in generalizing about them in detail. The precarium varied with the individual contract. It did not create a determinable relation between the grantor and the recipient. There are but two general characteristics to be noted. The precarium is at first a loan of land made in reply to a document requesting such a loan. Then in the course of the eighth and ninth centuries the Franks introduced a second document securing the precarist, who had generally made a previous surrender of his land. The precarium may then be defined as a loan of land operated by a previous surrender of property by the precarist. These points are familiar to readers of Fustel de Coulanges; the novelty lies in restricting the general definition of the institution within such narrow limits. With regard to the benefice, in like manner Professor Seeliger will go no further than to say that it is to be distinguished from land grants of a superior order by the obligation of making some kind of render or service, from those